

NOTES OF WORKING GROUP MEETING 5, JUNE 13, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m. by Michael McGonagle, co-chair.

Members present: Carole Bell; Bob Bibbo; Terri Bisson; Clayton Carlisle; Geoffrey DiCenso; Patrick Fingliss; Tom Getz; Terrence Gray; Susanne Greschner; Dante Ionata; Sally Johnson; Sarah Kite; Jamie M. Magnani; Mike McGonagle; Steven Mutter; Michael Panciocco; Shim Silverstein; Timothy Reagan; Barry Schiller; Jeanne Tracey-McAreavey; John Trevor (by telephone hook-up); Michael Walker; Harold Ward;

Observers; Elizabeth Leduc.

There were no comments concerning the May 9th Working Group meeting Notes.

One comment (from Ms. Bell) was received concerning the draft Part 1. Mr. Ionata reported comments concerning the Part 1 draft were received earlier from Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Fingliss.

No comments were received on the draft disposal report. Members can file with Mr. Ionata comments concerning the disposal report at any time.

Ms. Bell, chair of the Source Reduction Subcommittee, led a section-by-section detailed discussion of the draft Report of the Source Reduction Subcommittee, presenting each of her subcommittee's recommendations as follows:

The draft report recommends reestablishment of a Source Reduction Task Force. There was discussion of the work done by the Source Reduction Task Force established by the RIRRC and DEM 15 years ago and that it no longer exists for several reasons including the loss of vigorous proponents of source reduction, enactment of much source reduction-related legislation recommended by the Task Force, and the loss of the synergy developed then around the people involved with the original Task Force and the issues they and it grappled with.

The Subcommittee recommends establishment of waste prevention goals. Mr. Ionata said a numerical goal could lead to the cooking of numbers. Mr. Mutter said implementing a goal could be difficult. Mr. Gray said the waste reduction issue could be approached from the back end of the management cycle by DEM imposing a daily disposal cap at Central Landfill.

Ms. Bisson said a source reduction goal need not be a regulatory issue. Mr. McGonagle said it would probably be difficult if not impossible to enforce a numerical goal because of the difficulty of measuring achievement. Mr. Bibbo said the goal need not be numerical. Ms. Bell said the goal can instead be in the form of a pathway to be taken, a description of the programs to be implemented. Ms. Bell said that although the current Plan says source reduction should be maximized, nothing is now being done in this area and that if some sort of goal is not set, nothing will continue to be done.

A member suggested that specifying in the updated Plan the amount of money to be spent on source reduction could be a means of generating source reduction program activity. Ms. Bisson cautioned that this could lead to money being spent foolishly. Ms. Bell pointed to the large expenditures of money that have been made to purchase advertising to encourage recycling with little or nothing to show for it.

The Subcommittee recommends establishment of a State Waste Prevention Program with funding for a full-time Waste Prevention Program Manager. The Subcommittee included a model job description in Appendix A of its report. Mr. Gray said this Waste Prevention Program must be established as an integral element of an integrated solid waste management program and that it should be funded as such.

The Subcommittee recommends that R.I. State government establish an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program. Ms. Bell said a number of R.I. statutes establishing preferential purchasing standards for items with recycled content are simply being ignored by State agencies and that, by contrast, Massachusetts state government is doing an outstanding job in this area. Moreover, she said there are many types of environmentally preferable purchasing in addition to the purchasing of items with recycled content.

Ms. Bisson led the discussion of the Subcommittee's recommendation that funding should be provided to municipalities to start up Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) programs and that financial incentives should be provided to municipalities that implement PAYT programs. Various members explained the nature and advantages of PAYT programs and how they have successfully increased the diversion of material from disposal to recycling everywhere they have been implemented, with more than 100 Massachusetts municipalities running successful PAYT programs. It was generally agreed that the very low municipal solid waste tipping fee in Rhode Island is the principal reason municipalities here do not adopt PAYT programs.

Mr. Mutter said political support for PAYT at the municipal level will depend on whether it can be demonstrated that implementation of PAYT (with solid waste management funding thereby eliminated from the municipal budget) will lower the local tax rate. He said public meetings to explain PAYT to the citizenry and encourage its adoption will have to be widely employed.

Ms. Bisson led the discussion of the Subcommittee's recommendation that a study of resource management contracting be funded. Ms. Bisson explained that resource management contracting provides haulers with financial incentives to reduce the quantities of waste they pick up, increase recycling, and decrease their customers' costs.

Ms. Bell explained the recommendation by the Subcommittee that a product stewardship policy and program be established. She said one of the first tasks of the recommended Waste Prevention Task Force should be the development of a product stewardship policy for Rhode Island. Mr. Gray said a product stewardship statement should be included in the new Plan.

Ms. Bell briefly addressed the Subcommittee recommendation to expand reuse programs that divert materials from disposal for the purposes of beneficial reuse.

Ms. Bell introduced discussion of the Subcommittee's recommendation that DEM'S pollution prevention programs be expanded. Mr. Gray and Ms. Bell said it was important to ensure that sufficient funding is provided to maintain these programs. This discussion could not be completed because the Working Group meeting had to be adjourned for the facility tours that were scheduled to begin at 10:05 a.m. Mr. Ionata assured Ms. Bell that discussion of the remainder of the Subcommittee's report could be completed at the July meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:00 a.m. The tour of seven waste management facilities at the complex began immediately.